



News Release

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FIRST 5 CALIFORNIA ANNOUNCES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Kris Perry to Lead Statewide Organization Dedicated to Serving Children Ages 0 to 5 and Their Families

SACRAMENTO—First 5 California announced today the appointment of Kris Perry as the new Executive Director of its State Commission, which is charged with distributing approximately \$550 million in tobacco taxes annually to fund programs that serve the needs of children ages 0 to 5 and their families. At her new post, Perry will guide the Commission and support its goal of ensuring that all young children in California are healthy and ready to reach their greatest potential in school and in life. She will start at her new position on July 11, 2005.

Previously, Perry served as the Executive Director of First 5 San Mateo County. In that position since 2000, she led San Mateo County in providing resources, policy direction and community leadership for children ages 0 to 5 and their families. She also led the effort to develop large-scale initiatives such as the Children's Health Initiative, Preschool For All, Early Brain Development and School Readiness countywide.

"Kris' track record as E.D. of First 5 San Mateo County has been exemplary," said Rob Reiner, Chair of First 5 California. "From universal preschool programs to access to health care, she has made it happen. The Commission and the children of California are fortunate to have such a highly-qualified, goal-oriented person as our new executive director."

Perry spearheaded San Mateo's Preschool For All program, which will serve more than 800 children in Redwood City in the next school year, with hopes of expanding to all 4-year-olds in the county. Perry has a particular interest in developing high-quality child development programs for working families with modest incomes.

"This new position gives me a great opportunity to bring my know-how, experience and accomplishments from the county level to the state level," Perry said. "I look forward to the challenges – and successes – that lie ahead."

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Perry's credentials include the 2005 Vice Presidency of the First 5 Association of California as well as her stint as President of the California Children and Families Foundation. She chaired the 2003 Statewide Preschool for All Summit and the Association Preschool for All Task Force. She also serves as Regional Representative for the Bay Area.

"Kris Perry has demonstrated excellent leadership skills both as the Executive Director in San Mateo County and as an officer of the First 5 Association," said Michael Ruane, President of the First 5 Association of California. "Her background, skills and experience make her a perfect fit."

Prior to her tenure at First 5 San Mateo County, Perry spent 12 years at the Alameda County Social Services Agency. She held positions as a Dependency Investigator, Family Preservation Case Manager and Program Manager with an emphasis on Service Integration and Agency Planning. She received her Bachelor of Arts Degree from the University of California Santa Cruz and Master of Social Work from San Francisco State University. She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and a Board Certified Diplomat. She also holds a post-graduate certificate as a Service Integration Specialist. In 2003 she completed the Stanford Graduate School of Business Executive Program for Nonprofit Leaders.

Perry replaced Jane Henderson, who retired as the State Commission's executive director after serving the Commission for more than five years.

About First 5 California

First 5 California is dedicated to improving the lives of children under the age of 5. First 5 California (also known as the California Children and Families Commission) and the 58 County Commissions were established after voters passed Proposition 10 in November 1998, adding a 50 cents-per-pack tax on cigarettes to fund education, health, child care and other programs for expectant parents and children up to age 5. For more information, visit their Web site at www.first5california.com.

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